

WorkFirst Study

3000 Washington Families

Housing and Transportation for WorkFirst Families: 2000-2001

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This report describes preliminary results of the second wave of the WorkFirst Study (WFS). The study sample was drawn from the statewide list of adults receiving welfare assistance in March 1999. Survey respondents were interviewed between December 1999 and August 2000 and again between February and May 2001. This report uses data from 3,037 interviews in the first year and the first 1,462 re-interviews.

This report describes survey data on the housing of respondents, comparing responses from the 2000 and 2001 surveys. The surveys for both years asked about monthly housing costs, utility costs, type of housing, and receipt of government assistance for housing or heating.

In 2001, respondents were also asked about number of moves and reason for moving in the past year, receipt of housing assistance from non-governmental organizations, satisfaction with current housing, and transportation options.

FINDINGS

- **More respondents own their home in 2001 than in 2000 (15% versus 11%), though most still rent (83%).¹**

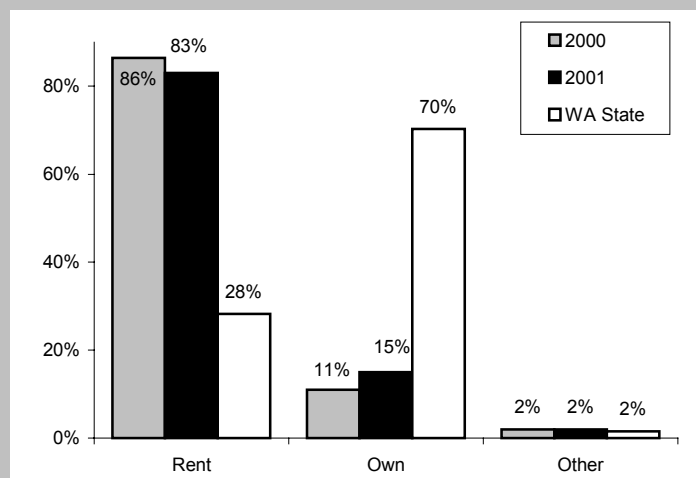
- **Over three-quarters were satisfied with their housing in 2001.**
- **The average costs of ownership did not change significantly. Respondents' share of rent increased slightly, from \$320 to \$338 per month.**
- **About a third of renters in both years reported receiving government rent subsidies; 12% reported receiving assistance from churches, social service or other agencies.**
- **Utility rates increased between 2000 and 2001.** In the summer, the average monthly cost increased from \$83 to \$96, and in the winter the average monthly cost increased from \$143 to \$170.
- **A smaller percentage of respondents received government heating subsidies (from 24% to 21%) at a higher average amount (\$257 to \$303).**
- **One-third of respondents moved between July 1999 and June 2000, and half of these reported the primary reason for moving was to have a larger home, to improve their housing situation, or because of family changes.**
- **Ninety-five percent of respondents have access to a vehicle or have public transportation near their home.**

¹ All comparisons are statistically significant at the 5% level unless otherwise noted.

Renting or Owning a Residence

Most respondents still rent their residence (83%), but an increasing number of respondents own their home (15% compared to 11% in 2000). The same percentage of respondents occupied their home without paying rent (2%). The rate of home ownership is still far lower for WorkFirst Study respondents than for all Washington state residents, according to the 2000 Washington State Population Survey [WPS].

FIGURE 1: RENTING OR OWNING A RESIDENCE



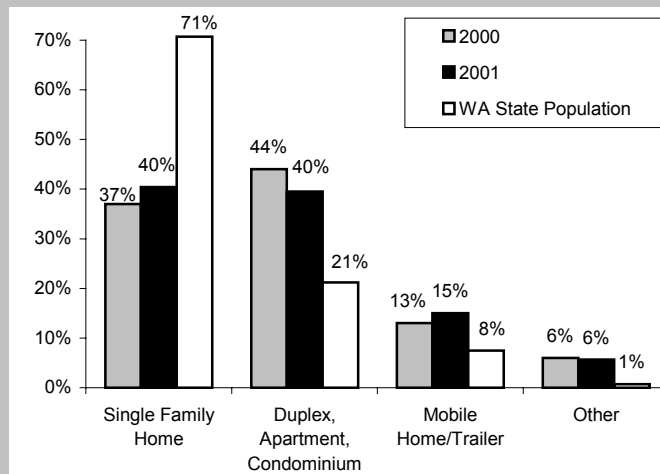
Type of Residence

In 2001, most respondents lived in a one-family house (40%) or a duplex, apartment, or condominium (40%). Fourteen percent lived in a mobile home or trailer.

Between 2000 and 2001, the percent of respondents living in single-family houses and mobile homes/trailers did not change significantly, but a slightly smaller proportion lived in duplexes, apartments, or condominiums. Six percent each year reported living in another type of dwelling.

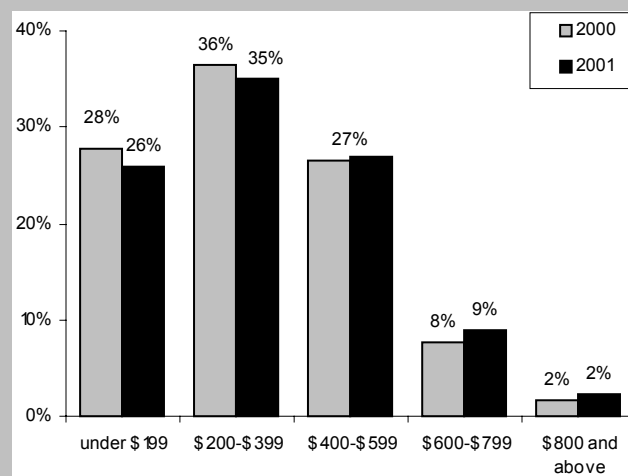
Renters: In both years, almost half of the respondents who rented their homes lived in a duplex, apartment or condominium. Nearly a third of all renters in both years lived in single-family houses, and almost a tenth of renters lived in mobile homes or trailers. Five percent of respondents in both years rented another type of dwelling.

Owners: Respondents who owned their residences lived primarily in single-family houses or mobile homes/trailers. Less than 1% reported owning a duplex, apartment or condominium, or another type of residence. The percentage of ownership of single-family houses and mobile homes/trailers increased slightly in the past year.

FIGURE 2: TYPES OF HOMES

Cost of Renting

The average amount of rent paid by respondents rose from \$320 to \$338 per month. This is about half of the Washington State average rent of \$620. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64% and 61%) in both years paid less than \$400 as their share of rent.

FIGURE 3: MONTHLY RENT

Government Assistance: For those renters who did not pay all of the household rent, about a third each year received government rent assistance. Statewide, 11% of renters receive a government subsidy for rent (WPS). The average amount of assistance that WorkFirst survey respondents received decreased (but the difference was not significant) from \$473 to \$458 per month. For those respondents who received assistance, their average share of monthly rent increased slightly from \$177 to \$199.²

Other Assistance: Respondents were also asked in 2001 about assistance with rental costs from social service agencies, churches, or other organizations. Twelve percent of respondents reported receiving assistance from these types of organizations.

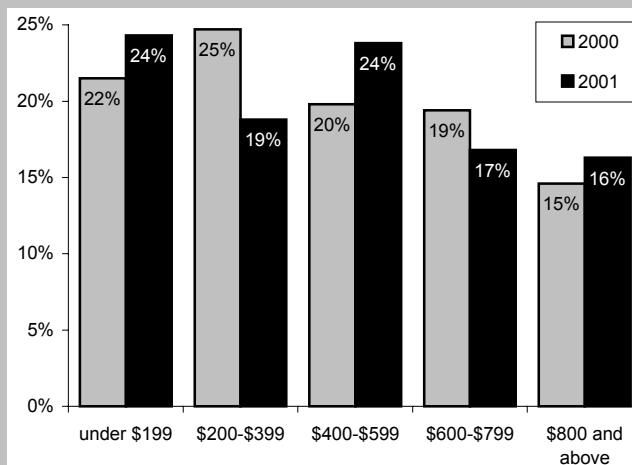
² Statistically significant at the 10% level.

Cost of Owning

Respondents who own their home were asked about monthly mortgage, taxes, and insurance payments.³ The average cost of ownership, \$463, reported in 2001 was not significantly different from the previous year.

Between 2000 and 2001, the percentage of owners who paid less than \$400 per month decreased slightly from 47% to 43%. The percentage that paid over \$800 per month increased from 15% to 16%. None of the differences in monthly housing costs were statistically significant.

FIGURE 4: MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS FOR OWNERS



Utilities

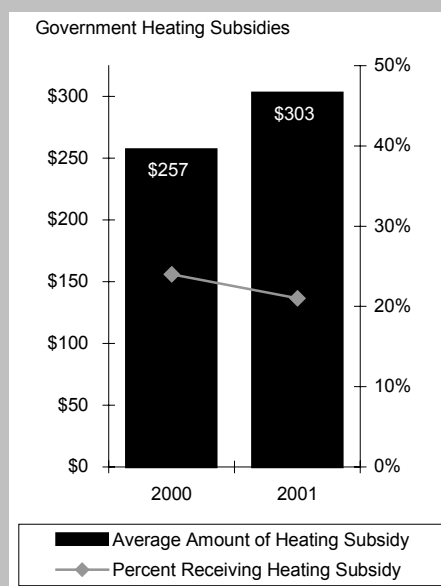
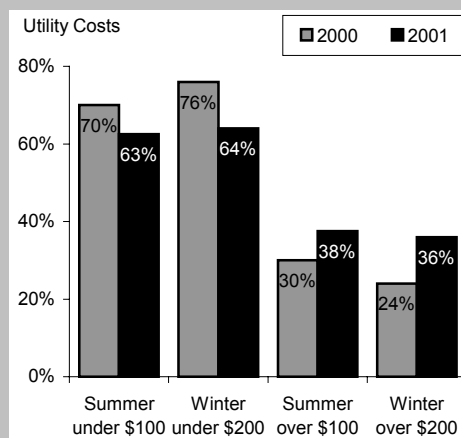
Most respondents (more than four-fifths) each year reported paying for their utilities in addition to their monthly rent or mortgage. These respondents were asked about the monthly cost of utilities such as water, electricity, gas, or oil in the summer and winter months.

Summer: Average utility rates increased from \$83 per month last year to \$94 per month in 2001. The percentage that paid less than \$100 per month decreased from 70% to 63%. The percent that paid over \$200 per month increased from 8% to 10%.

Winter: Average utility rates increased from \$142 per month in 2000 to \$171 per month in 2001. The percentage of respondents who paid less than \$200 per month decreased from 76% to 64%. The percent that paid over \$300 per month increased from 9% to 14%.

³ Of the respondents who reported owning a home, 6% did not know their monthly mortgage payment and 33% did not know what their taxes and insurance cost per year.

FIGURES 5 & 6: CHANGES IN UTILITY COSTS & GOVERNMENT HEATING SUBSIDIES



Government Assistance with Heating: Between 2000 to 2001, a lower percentage of respondents received government assistance with heating, but they received a higher average assistance level. In 2000, 24% received an average of \$257 for the winter. In the 2001 survey, 21% of respondents reported assistance at an average of \$303 for the previous winter.

Housing Changes and Level of Satisfaction

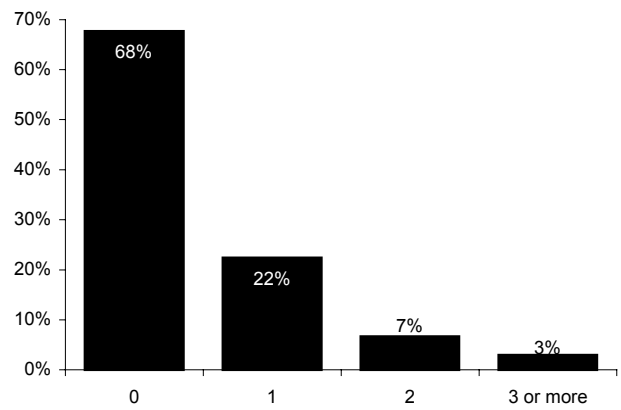
Two-thirds of respondents had not moved between July 1999 and June 2000.

Of the 32% who had moved during the twelve-month period, 18% moved into a larger home and 17% moved to improve their housing situation in other ways (to have their own home or a better home, to purchase a home, or to leave a shelter).

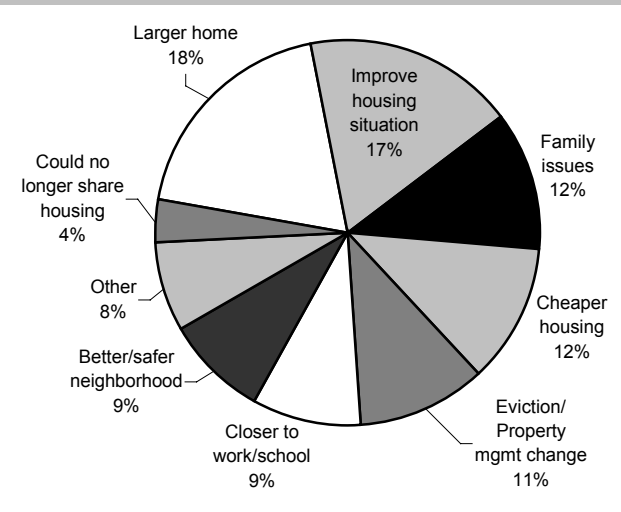
Twelve percent moved as a result of family issues (to leave a partner, to be with a partner, because their family size changed, or due to domestic violence), and another 12% moved to find cheaper housing. Others moved because of an eviction or change in the property management⁴ (11%), to be closer to work or school (9%), for a better or safer neighborhood (9%), or because they could no longer share housing (4%). Eight percent gave other reasons.

⁴ The “change in property management” category includes respondents whose landlords were uncooperative, wouldn’t fix heaters or other appliances, landlords who sold the building or lost the building due to foreclosure.

**FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF MOVES
(JUNE 1999 TO JUNE 2000)**



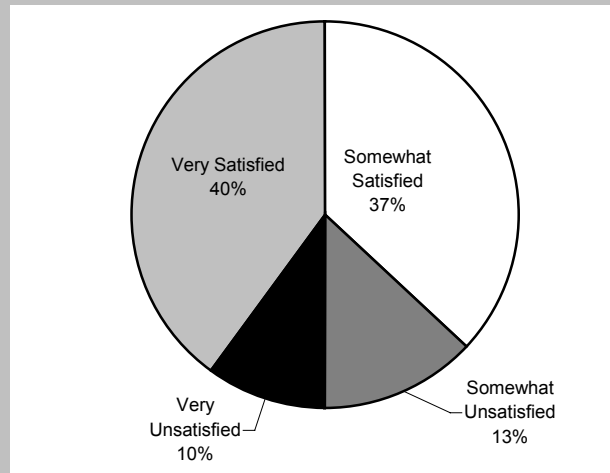
**FIGURE 8: REASON FOR MOST
RECENT MOVE**



Housing Satisfaction

In 2001, respondents were asked about their level of satisfaction with their current housing. Over three-quarters of survey respondents (77%) were somewhat or very satisfied with their housing. Only 10% were very unsatisfied with their housing.

**FIGURE 9: SATISFACTION WITH
CURRENT HOUSING**



Transportation

Most respondents reported having more than one transportation option available.

Eighty percent reported owning or using a motor vehicle on a regular basis. Over three-quarters of respondents (76%) said that they have a driver's license, and the same number said they have public transportation near their home.

Five percent of respondents reported not having public transportation near their home and either no vehicle or no driver's license. Nineteen percent had no public transit but had access to a vehicle and a driver's license.

FIGURE 10: TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

